



Network News

February 2009

Secretary Shinseki Announces Choice for VA Deputy Secretary: Secretary of Veterans Affairs (VA) Eric K. Shinseki praised President Barack Obama's intent to nominate W. Scott Gould as next Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs. Gould is currently vice president for public sector strategy at IBM Global Business Services and a former intelligence officer in the naval reserve. He has public service experience at both the departments of Commerce and Treasury.

Gould worked in the public sector as the chief financial officer and assistant secretary for administration at the Commerce Department and deputy assistant secretary for finance and management at the Treasury Department from 1994 to 1999. Prior to his job at IBM, he was chief executive officer of The O'Gara Company, a strategic advisory and investment services firm, and chief operating officer of Exolve, a technology services company.

As a naval reservist, Gould served at sea aboard the guided missile destroyer Richard E. Byrd and as assistant professor of naval science at Rochester University. He was recalled to active duty for both Operation Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom as a naval intelligence reservist.

He has been awarded the Department of Commerce Medal, the Treasury Medal and the Navy Meritorious Service Medal and is coauthor of *The People Factor: Strengthening America by Investing in the Public Service*. He holds a bachelor of arts degree from Cornell University and a masters in business administration and a doctorate in education from the University of Rochester.

Change For Your Calendar: Network Director Timothy P. Shea will host Veteran Service Organization Briefings on the following dates/locations:

- February 25 at 2 pm – VA North Texas Health Care System, Dallas
- February 26 at 2 pm – Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, Temple
- February 27 at 2 pm – South Texas Veterans Health Care System, San Antonio



Valley Coastal Bend Updates: The VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System and South Texas Veterans Health Care System awarded the Harlingen Ambulatory Surgery and Specialty Outpatient Center project contract to Boyer Harlingen, L.C.

The three-story, 120,000 sq. ft facility and three-story 750 car parking garage (artist rendering at left), which is scheduled to open in October 2010, will be located on the campus of the University of Texas Regional Academic Health Center at Harlingen. It will offer a full range of outpatient services including six surgical suites, and clinics for prosthetics care, oncology and sensory aids.

VA estimates that once the center is completed, it will eliminate approximately 95 percent of the four-hour one way trips many veterans enrolled for VA care currently make to the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital, San Antonio. VA also plans to expand the services it provides at its health care facilities in McAllen and Corpus Christi.

Gulf War Advisory Committee: The Central Texas Health Care System will host the Gulf War Advisory Committee visit on March 18 -19 at Temple. The Committee will review benefits and services provided to Gulf War Veterans.

PVA Vocational Rehabilitation Program: The Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and the South Texas Veterans Health Care System hosted a ribbon cutting on January 27 for the PVA Vocational Rehabilitation Program at the Audie L. Murphy Memorial Veterans Hospital, San Antonio. PVA estimates the national unemployment rate for veterans with severe disabilities to be more than 85 percent. The new center aims to make this grim statistic a thing of the past by helping to unleash the untapped talent and potential of this often underutilized part of our workforce.

The Spinal Cord Injury Center at the Audie L. Murphy Hospital received a three-year Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) accreditation on January 16.

Psychiatry Unit Open House: The North Texas Health Care System, Dallas, hosted an Open House on January 22 for a second Psychiatry Unit which fully reopened after a stand down halted inpatient admissions. The Unit is comprised of 20 beds, and has improved activities and accessibility for the patients. The Unit exceeds national patient safety standards and environment of care requirements.

Go For The Blue Campaign: The South Texas Veterans Health Care System's [Go For The Blue](#) campaign recently received the Public Relations News' Platinum Award for empowering veteran/patients, employees and all stakeholders through information and education of the Veterans Health Administration's Performance Measures. The [Go For The Blue](#) campaign has been selected as one of the cases represented in PR News "*Top 100 Case Studies Guidebook*."



My HealtheVet: My HealtheVet (MHV) is the gateway to veteran health benefits and services. It provides access to: trusted health information, links to Federal and VA benefits and resources, the Personal Health Journal, and online VA prescription refills. In the future, MHV registrants will be able to view appointments, co-pay balances, and key portions of their VA medical records online.

Important Phone Numbers

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255

VA Health Care 1- 877-222-8387

VA Benefits 1-800-827-1000

Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)

- **Kimberly Fite-Thurston**, LCSW, VA North Texas Health Care System, Dallas, 214-857-0388
- **Douglas Weeks**, LCSW, Central Texas Veterans Health Care System, Temple, 254-743-1815, ext. 41815
- **Manuel de la Garza**, LCSW, South Texas Veterans Health Care, San Antonio, 210-617-5300 ext. 10439

For more information on the VA Heart of Texas Health Care Network or *Network News*, please contact:

- Diana L. Struski, Public Affairs Officer, (817) 385-3768, Diana.Struski@va.gov;
- William McLemore, Congressional and Veterans Service Organizations Liaison, (210) 616-8143, William.McLemore@va.gov; or
- Hans Holkon, Customer Service Manager, (817) 385-3796, Hans.Holkon@va.gov.